

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated February 28, 2007. Applicant has amended the application as set forth above. In more specific, claims 1 and 5 have been amended, claim 4 has been canceled, and claim 6 has been added. All the features of the added claims are fully supported by the originally filed application including the original claims. Thus, the amendments do not add new matter to the application. Upon the entry of the amendments, claims 1-3, and 5-6 are pending in this application. Applicant respectfully requests the entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application.

Objections to Drawings

The Examiner objected Figures 4 and 5 for not being designated by a legend such as – Prior Art--. In response, Applicant has amended Figures 4 and 5 as attached to this response.

Objection to Abstract

The Examiner objected the abstract of the disclosure because there should be no reference to purported merits. In response, Applicant has amended the abstract accordingly.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In response, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 5, and clarified to claim the subcombination of the coupler.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lancelot III (US Patent No. 6,099,196). Applicant has amended claims 1 and 5, and respectfully submits that the amended claims are not anticipated by Lancelot III. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Law of Anticipation

Anticipation under Section 102 can be found only if a reference shows exactly what is claimed. *Titanium Metals Corp. v. Banner*, 778 F.2d 775 (Fed. Cir. 1985). More particularly, the finding of anticipation requires the disclosure in a single piece of prior art of each and every limitation of a claimed invention. *Electro Med. Sys. S.A. v. Cooper Life Sciences*, 34 F.3d 1048, 1052 (Fed. Cir. 1994). “To anticipate, every element and limitation of the claimed invention must be found in a single prior art reference, arranged as in the claim.” *Brown v. 3M*, 265 F.3d 1349 (Fed. Cir. 2001).

Disclosure of Lancelot III

Lancelot III discloses a taper lock rebar splice joint comprising two half shells (24”) having two internal shoulders (56) each, and an outer shell (58). (See, e.g., col. 4, lines 15-38; Fig. 6).

Lancelot III Does Not Anticipate Amended Claims 1 and 5

Claim 1 is directed to a joint equipment for steel reinforcing comprising a cover unit (10a, 10b) and two or more locking bushings (20). The features include: the cover unit (10) wrapping around the reinforcing bars is held around by the two or more locking bushings (20) and each of the locking bushings 20 has a shape of pipe or ring; the two or more locking bushings (20) are configured to be driven tightly around the cover unit (10) in one longitudinal direction, which is very important in facilitating coupling of the reinforcing bars; and the reinforcing bars can be connected by the coupler toward the direction of smaller-diameter part of the cover unit (10).

As discussed above, Lancelot III discloses an outer shell (58). However, Lancelot III’s taper lock rebar splice joint does not have an element “two or more locking bushings” in the present invention (reference numeral, 20 in Figs. 1 and 2).

In view of foregoing, Lancelot III does not anticipate amended claims 1 and 5. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103Claim 3

The Examiner rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lancelot III in view of Kim (US Patent No. 6,860,672).

In response, since claim 3 depends directly or indirectly on claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that applicant does not necessarily agree with the characterization and assessments of the dependent claims made by the examiner, and applicant submits that each claim is patentable on its own merits. Furthermore, Kim does not remedy the deficiencies of Lancelot III. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4

The Examiner rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lancelot III in view of Harrall et al. (US Patent No. 2,066,276).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner. However, Applicant has canceled claim 4 solely to expedite the prosecution of the application. Therefore, this rejection is moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Still, Applicant argues that the combination of Lancelot III and Harrall does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness against original claim 4.

Disclosure of Harrall

Harrall discloses a chuck or coupling comprising a sleeve (12) and collars (15, 16). The inner surface of the collar (16) is preferably divided into longitudinal sections (17, 18) by a groove (19). (See, e.g., page 2, right page, lines 1-2) The collar (15 in Figs 1 and 2) or the sleeve (25 in Fig. 3) includes multiple tapers. (See, e.g., page 2, left column, lines 29-33; page 3, left column, lines 43-36; Figs. 1-3)

No Prima Facie Case of Obviousness Has Been Established

As discussed, Lancelot III does not teach two or more locking bushings. Even though Harrall discloses two collars (15, 16), they do not suggest the structure and function of the two or more locking bushings of the present invention, which are driven in one longitudinal

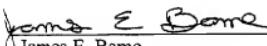
direction from the small-diameter part to the larger-diameter part. As such, Harrall does not remedy the deficiencies of Lancelot III, and the combination of Lancelot III and Harrall does not provide every element of original claim 4. Therefore, the combination does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks made above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-3 and 5-6 are in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully solicited. If it is believed that a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of the present application, or clarify matters with regard to its allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectively submitted,

Date: June 18, 2007



James E. Bame
Regis. No. 44521
Tel: 213-637-5633
IPLA P.A.
3580 Wilshire Blvd 17th Fl.
Los Angeles, CA 90010